



# TIMELESS ECHOES

## AFIFA ALEIBY



26 February - 8 May 2023  
Zawyeh Gallery, Dubai

In *Timeless Echoes*, renowned Iraqi artist Afifa Aleiby presents work echoing her own life and tackling multiple societal and humane subjects. Her paintings have a unique quality of beauty mixed with the intensity of emotions. They are dominated by women: strong, fragile, happy, or miserable. Part of her work emits feelings of uneasiness, where women are presented in the form of monuments; white, motionless, and sad: broken in half like a statue; playing flute in the darkness; dressed in black with a dark war background. Another section reflects happiness and contentment: A woman fast asleep holding her wide awake baby; another standing by a window sill holding a flower as if waiting for a lover; a woman enjoying a sunny day in nature with warm settings.

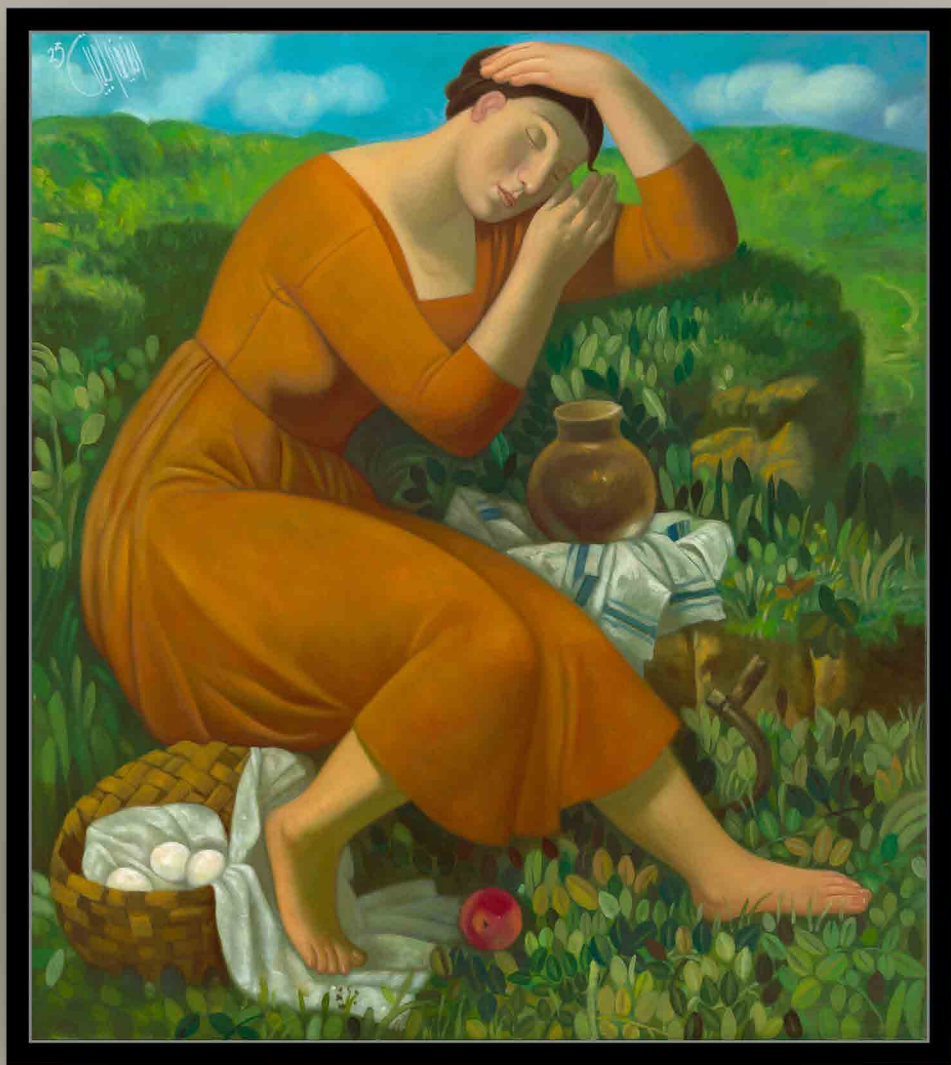
Women appear elegantly despite the subject of the work even if the artist is reflecting on the reality of being a woman in a harsh society or presenting a scene from the war. There is a certain kind of beauty and serenity that envelopes their existence on Aleiby's canvas. Her works are poetic, yet they are a mixture of realism and symbolism, with surreal quality at a time.

The variety of subjects she tackles expresses her life and own experience. Nada Shabout, the Iraqi renowned art historian, notes: "At the first glance, Afifa's work rattles the viewer with its intimacy. One cannot escape the uneasiness of entering a personal space. Afifa's vibrant colors and the elegant lines of her figures are self-reflective. In response to her physical displacements, the space of the painting becomes her ultimate home." <sup>1</sup>

Aleiby's work is a reflection on women's state in society even though she stresses that she does not intend it to be "a feminist statement" although it "may at times be related to women's issues". She adds: "I use the female figure as a medium to help communicate this idea. Women as human figures have something special that you cannot find in men: the way they move and their beauty." <sup>2</sup> She expresses her personal experiences through her work along certain aspects of issues and ideas, whether reflecting on politics, beauty, or society. Yet the human remains the focal point in the painting and is represented by a woman.

1. Nada Shabout, To be a Woman..., 10.4.2022, <https://www.afifaaleiby.com/resources/to-be-a-woman/>

2. Courage in Creativity, Reconstructing the things around us: Afifa Aleiby on the role of the artist in society, 25.1.2017, <https://ruyatemp.frb.io/en/2017/01/4291/>



**Afifa Aleiby**

*Rest after the Harvest* (2022-23)

Oil on canvas

90 x 80 cm | 35.4 x 31.5 in



**Afifa Aleiby**

*Do Not Disturb Her* (2022-23)

Oil on canvas

60 x 75 cm | 23.6 x 29.5 in



**Afifa Aleiby**

*Timeless Echoes* (2022-23)

Oil on canvas

90 x 75 cm | 35.4 x 29.5 in





**Afifa Aleiby**

*Wish Flower* (2022-23)

Oil on canvas

80 x 60 cm | 31.5 x 23.6 in



**Afifa Aleiby**

*The Rape of Baghdad* (2022-23)

Oil on canvas

80 x 120 cm | 31.5 x 47.2 in



**Afifa Aleiby**

*Abuse* (2022)

Oil on canvas

125 x 100 cm | 49.2 x 39.3 in



**Afifa Aleiby**

*At the Spring* (2022)

Oil on canvas

125 x 100 cm | 49.2 x 39.3 in



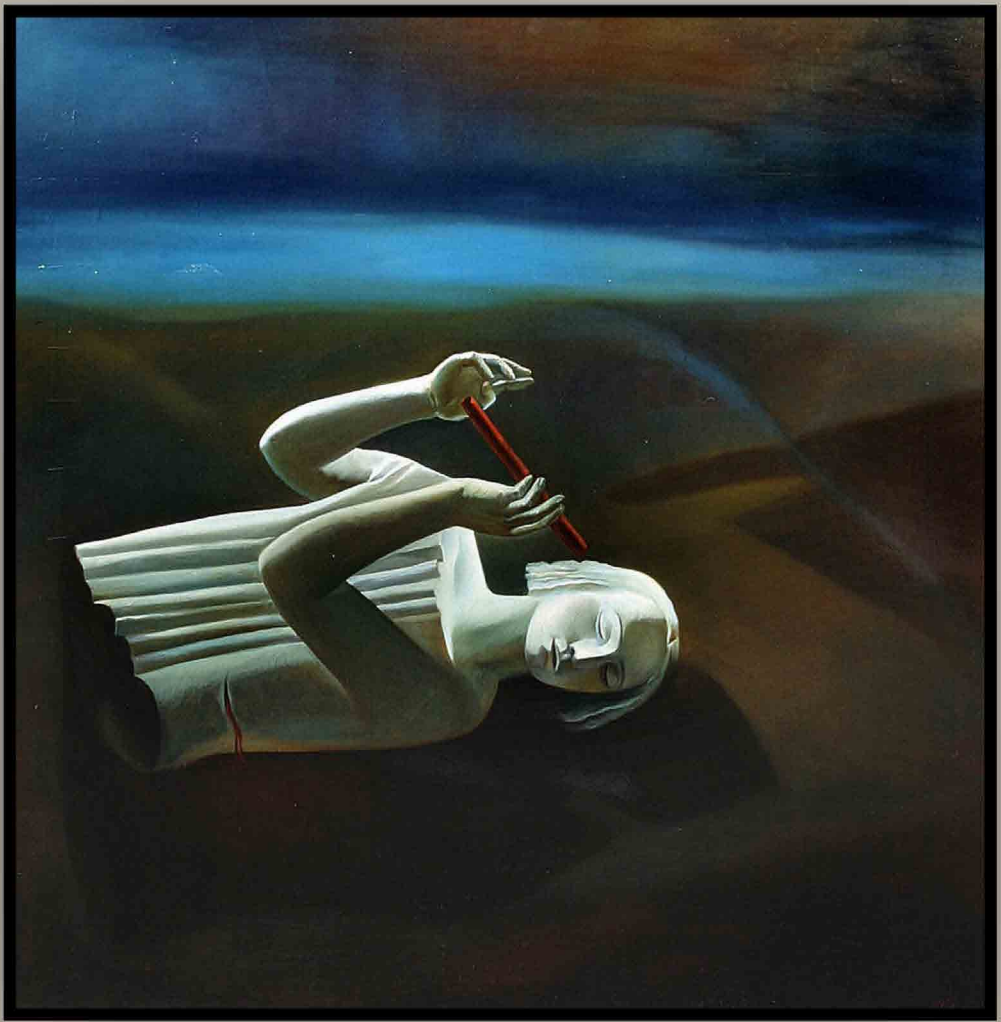


**Afifa Aleiby**

*Memory* (2000)

Oil on canvas

70 x 70 cm | 27.5 x 27.5 in



**Afifa Aleiby**

*Traces* (1986)

Oil on canvas

80 x 80 cm | 31.5 x 31.5 in



**Afifa Aleiby**

*Self Portrait* (1990)

Oil on canvas

50 x 40 cm | 19.7 x 15.7 in



## Zawyeh Gallery

### *Timeless Echoes by Afifa Aleiby*

26 Feb 2023 to 08 May 2023

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## BIOGRAPHY

Afifa Aleiby (B.1953) is an Iraqi artist born in the city of Basra, in the utmost southern part of Iraq. She took up her studies at the Institute of Fine Arts in Baghdad while working as an illustrator for the Iraqi press before leaving Iraq for the Soviet Union in 1974 to study and specialize in monumental art at the renowned Suikuv Institute in Moscow. Due to the political situation in Iraq, she was unable to return to her native country after the completion of her studies and decided to move to Italy and later back to Moscow before settling in Yemen to work as a teacher at the Institute of Fine Arts in Aden, where she also illustrated children's books and magazines. Aleiby has since been living and working in the Netherlands and keeps contributing to many cultural activities in support of the Iraqi and international democratic movement in the struggle against terrorism, racism, war, and dictatorship. Not having returned to her native country for 35 years, she has built a strong connection to every country she has been living in since leaving Iraq, both in a cultural and personal sense. Her connection to humanity and different cultures has made solidarity transcending geographical and cultural borders an important theme in her work. Bringing together different influences from Renaissance painting to religious icons and social realism, she uses the female figure as a recurring motif to reflect beauty, taste, politics, and society.

## SELECTED COLLECTIONS

Azman Museum (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)  
The Farjam Foundation (Dubai, UAE)  
Barjeel Art Foundation (Sharjah, UAE)  
The Bunker Artspace Museum (Florida, USA)  
Rana Sadik Collection (Kuwait City, Kuwait)  
Alex Klimt Collection (London, UK)





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